Best Vitamins for Dry Skin and Eczema: What May Actually Help?

Dry, itchy, and flaky skin can affect comfort, sleep, and confidence. When the dryness is linked to eczema, the problem is more complex because eczema involves inflammation and a weakened skin barrier, not simply a lack of moisture.

Many people search for the **best vitamins for dry skin and eczema**, hoping a supplement can calm irritation or prevent flare-ups. Certain nutrients support normal skin and immune function, but research does not show that one vitamin works as a universal eczema treatment. Supplements are most likely to help when they correct an actual nutritional deficiency.

Vitamin D currently has some of the most promising research, while evidence for zinc, vitamin E, probiotics, fish oil, and plant-based oils remains limited or inconsistent. Supplements should support, rather than replace, moisturizers and treatments recommended by a dermatologist.

Why Eczema Makes Skin So Dry

Atopic dermatitis, commonly called eczema, causes dry, inflamed, and intensely itchy skin. The condition affects the skin barrier, making it harder for the skin to hold moisture and protect itself from irritants.

Because moisture escapes more easily, eczema-prone skin can become rough, cracked, sensitive, or painful. Scratching may further damage the barrier and intensify the itch-and-scratch cycle.

This is why skin care remains the foundation of eczema management. The American Academy of Dermatology recommends using a mild, fragrance-free cream or ointment and applying it while the skin is still damp after bathing.

Vitamins may help support overall nutritional health, but they cannot replace the direct barrier protection provided by regular moisturization.

Vitamin D: The Most Promising Option

Vitamin D supports immune regulation and several biological processes involving the skin. Researchers have therefore studied whether low vitamin D levels may be connected with eczema severity.

A 2024 systematic review and meta-analysis found that vitamin D supplementation was associated with a modest reduction in atopic dermatitis severity in children and adults. However, the researchers emphasized that larger and longer studies are still needed.

The evidence is not completely consistent. An earlier meta-analysis of five randomized trials found no significant reduction in eczema severity. Major complementary-health guidance also considers the evidence insufficient to recommend vitamin D routinely as an eczema treatment.

Vitamin D may be more relevant for someone who has a confirmed deficiency. A healthcare professional can determine whether testing is appropriate based on diet, sun exposure, medications, age, and other risk factors.

High doses should not be taken without guidance. The general daily upper limit for most adults is 4,000 IU from all sources unless a clinician prescribes a different amount for a diagnosed deficiency. Excessive vitamin D can raise calcium levels and cause serious health problems.

Food sources include fatty fish, egg yolks, fortified milk, fortified plant-based beverages, and some fortified cereals.

Zinc: Important for Skin, but Not a Proven Eczema Treatment

Zinc is involved in immune function, protein production, cell division, and wound healing. These roles make it important for maintaining normal skin.

A zinc deficiency can contribute to skin problems, but taking extra zinc does not automatically improve eczema when a person already receives enough. Clinical guidance describes the evidence for zinc supplementation in established atopic dermatitis as inconsistent.

Zinc is available in foods such as meat, shellfish, poultry, beans, nuts, seeds, dairy products, and fortified cereals.

More is not better. The upper daily limit for adults is 40 mg from food, beverages, supplements, and medications combined. Long-term excessive intake can interfere with copper absorption, and zinc can interact with certain antibiotics and other medicines.

A zinc supplement should therefore be considered only when dietary intake is inadequate or deficiency is suspected.

Vitamin E: Antioxidant Support with Limited Evidence

Vitamin E is a fat-soluble antioxidant that helps protect cells from oxidative damage. It is commonly included in supplements marketed for dry or aging skin.

Some small studies have examined vitamin E for eczema, but the available evidence is not strong enough to call it one of the best vitamins for eczema treatment. Current guidance considers its benefit uncertain.

Most people can obtain vitamin E from foods such as almonds, sunflower seeds, peanuts, vegetable oils, spinach, and fortified cereals.

High-dose supplements may increase bleeding risk, particularly in people taking anticoagulant or antiplatelet medication. The risks and interactions make it important to discuss concentrated vitamin E supplements with a healthcare professional.

Probiotics: Results Depend on the Product and Person

Probiotics are live microorganisms found in some fermented foods and dietary supplements. Researchers are studying whether the gut microbiome can influence immune activity and inflammatory skin conditions.

Some reviews in adults have reported improvements in eczema severity with particular probiotic strains. However, the results vary substantially by strain, dose, study population, treatment duration, and age group. Findings from one probiotic product cannot be applied to every supplement sold under the same category.

Current clinical guidance does not routinely recommend probiotics or prebiotics for treating established atopic dermatitis because the overall evidence remains inconsistent.

People who are immunocompromised, seriously ill, pregnant, or considering a probiotic for a young child should consult a healthcare professional before starting one.

Omega-3 and Fish Oil

Omega-3 fatty acids help perform several functions in the body and participate in inflammatory pathways. This has led to interest in fish oil for eczema and very dry skin.

Despite the theory, studies have not established a reliable benefit for treating eczema. A meta-analysis of placebo-controlled trials found no meaningful effect from fish oil

supplementation, and current guidance does not recommend it as a standard atopic dermatitis treatment.

Omega-3-rich foods can still be part of a balanced diet. Sources include salmon, sardines, trout, walnuts, chia seeds, and ground flaxseed.

Fish oil supplements may interact with medications and may not be suitable for everyone, particularly at high doses.

Evening Primrose Oil and Borage Oil

Evening primrose and borage oils contain gamma-linolenic acid, a fatty acid that has been promoted for inflammation and eczema.

However, stronger reviews have not confirmed a meaningful clinical benefit. A Cochrane review covering 27 trials and nearly 1,600 participants found that oral evening primrose and borage oils did not provide a useful improvement in eczema compared with placebo.

These oils should not be assumed to be safe simply because they are plant-based. They may cause side effects or interact with medications, and they should not replace established eczema care.

Is a Multivitamin Worth Taking?

A multivitamin may help fill nutritional gaps for people with restrictive diets, reduced food intake, absorption problems, or medically identified deficiencies. It is unlikely to improve eczema simply because it contains many vitamins.

Multivitamins can also overlap with individual supplements. For example, someone may unknowingly take vitamin D in a multivitamin, a bone-health formula, and a separate vitamin D product at the same time.

Check the Supplement Facts labels of all products and calculate the combined intake. The NIH advises ensuring that fortified foods and multiple supplements do not push nutrient intake above established upper limits.

Food First Is Usually the Better Starting Point

A varied diet supplies nutrients together with protein, healthy fats, fiber, and other beneficial compounds.

A skin-supportive eating pattern can include:

- Fatty fish, eggs, and fortified products for vitamin D
- Meat, seafood, beans, nuts, and seeds for zinc
- Nuts, seeds, spinach, and vegetable oils for vitamin E
- Fruits and vegetables for vitamin C and other antioxidants
- Adequate protein to support normal tissue maintenance

- Water and other fluids for overall hydration

Avoid eliminating major food groups solely because you have eczema. Restrictive diets can lead to nutritional deficiencies, especially in children. Food removal should be supervised when a genuine allergy or food-triggered reaction is suspected.

Supplements Cannot Replace a Good Skin-Care Routine

Even the best vitamins for dry skin and eczema will have limited value if the skin barrier is not cared for directly.

Use lukewarm rather than very hot water, choose a mild fragrance-free cleanser, and apply a thick cream or ointment immediately after bathing. Reapply moisturizer whenever the skin feels dry.

Continue prescribed topical or oral treatments as directed. Do not stop medication because you have started a vitamin or herbal supplement.

Seek medical attention when eczema is spreading, interfering with sleep, producing open sores, developing yellow crust or drainage, or failing to improve with regular care. These symptoms may require prescription treatment or evaluation for infection.

Final Thoughts

There is no single supplement that qualifies as the best choice for every person with dry skin and eczema. Vitamin D has the most encouraging recent research, but findings remain mixed, and routine supplementation is not established as a replacement for standard care.

Zinc and vitamin E are important nutrients, but supplements are more likely to help when a deficiency exists. Evidence for probiotics varies by strain, while fish oil, evening primrose oil, and borage oil have not shown dependable benefits.

The safest approach is to maintain an eczema-friendly skin-care routine, eat a varied diet, test for suspected deficiencies when appropriate, and discuss supplements with a qualified healthcare professional before taking high doses or combining products.